Do I Really Need Antibiotics?

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Source Supported By:

Assistant Professor Dr Lyna Irawati
Por Choo Shiuan
Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences
UCSI University

Agenda

01 What are Bacteria?

02 What are Antibiotics?

03 Types of Antibiotics

04 When are antibiotics used for?

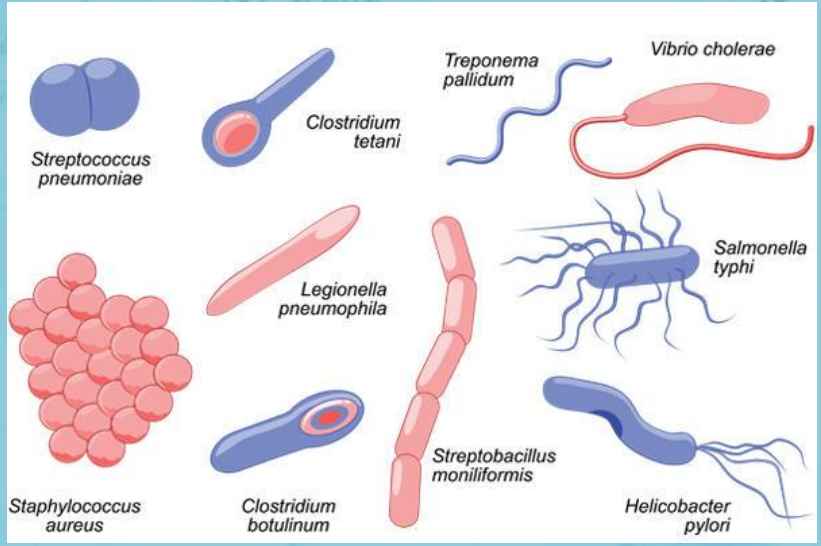
05 Side Effects of Antibiotics

06 Antibiotic Resistance

What are Bacteria?

- Bacteria are very small living things that are invisible to the naked eye without the help of a microscope.

- Bacteria can exist and grow anywhere inside and outside the human body. Some bacteria are beneficial to humans, but some are harmful and can cause illnesses.



What are Antibiotics?

- Antibiotics are medicines that kill bacteria or prevent their growth.

Types of Antibiotics

- There are many different types of antibiotics such as:
  - ❖ Amoxicillin
  - ❖ Azithromycin
  - ❖ Cefuroxime
  - ❖ Cloxacillin
  - ❖ Doxycycline

- Different types of antibiotics are needed to treat different types of bacterial infections.
- Doctors will prescribe antibiotics based on the diagnosis. Pharmacists will check and confirm the appropriateness of the antibiotics and its dosage.

When are antibiotics used for?

- Antibiotics are used to treat bacterial infections. In some cases, they can be used to prevent these infections. However, ***they are NOT effective for the treatment of viral infections.*** Table 1 shows common illnesses and symptoms caused by bacteria and viruses.

- Taking antibiotics for viral infections will NOT:

1. Cure the infection
2. Help you feel better
3. Prevent others from getting the infection

Table 1. Common illnesses and symptoms caused by bacteria and viruses

Common illnesses and symptoms caused by bacteria	Common illnesses and symptoms caused by viruses
Some lung infections such as pneumonia (inflammation or swelling of the lungs)	Colds Symptoms of colds include cough, fever, runny nose or blocked nose, sneezing, sore throat
Some skin infections such as severe acne	
Urinary tract infections	

When will my doctor prescribe antibiotics for me?

- Your doctor will prescribe antibiotics when you have **a *bacterial infection.***
- If your doctor does not prescribe antibiotics, you should NOT demand them.
- Only take antibiotics if your doctor prescribes them for you.

How should I take antibiotics?

- Take the antibiotics exactly as your doctor or pharmacist tells you, and follow the instructions on the label.

- Take the antibiotics at the **same time each day**. This will help you remember to take them and ensure that the antibiotics will kill the bacteria or prevent their growth effectively.

- **Finish the prescribed course of antibiotics**, even if you feel better, unless your doctor tells you otherwise.

- If you do not finish the course, some bacteria may not be killed and the infection may return. Additionally, the bacteria may become resistant to the antibiotics.

Missed a dose of antibiotics?

- If you miss a dose of antibiotics, take the missed dose as soon as you remember, and then continue the regular dosage schedule.
- If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose, and then continue the regular dosage schedule.
- Never take a double dose to compensate for the missed dose.

Accidentally taken an extra dose of antibiotics?

- If you accidentally take one extra dose of antibiotics, it is unlikely to cause you any serious harm. However, it will increase your chances of experiencing side effects from the medicine.

- If you accidentally take more than one extra dose of antibiotics, contact your doctor or pharmacist immediately.

Side Effects of Antibiotics

- As with any medicine, antibiotics can cause side effects. The most common side effects of antibiotics are:

✓ Diarrhoea
✓ Nausea
✓ Vomiting
✓ Stomach discomfort

- These side effects are usually mild and should wear off once you finish the course of antibiotics. If they persist, contact your doctor or pharmacist for advice.

Side Effects of Antibiotics

- In rare cases, antibiotics can cause serious and potentially life-threatening allergic reactions. Symptoms of these allergic reactions include:

✓ Itchy skin or rashes
✓ Swelling of the eyes or lips
✓ Difficulty breathing
✓ Difficulty swallowing

- If you experience any of these symptoms, contact your doctor or pharmacist immediately.

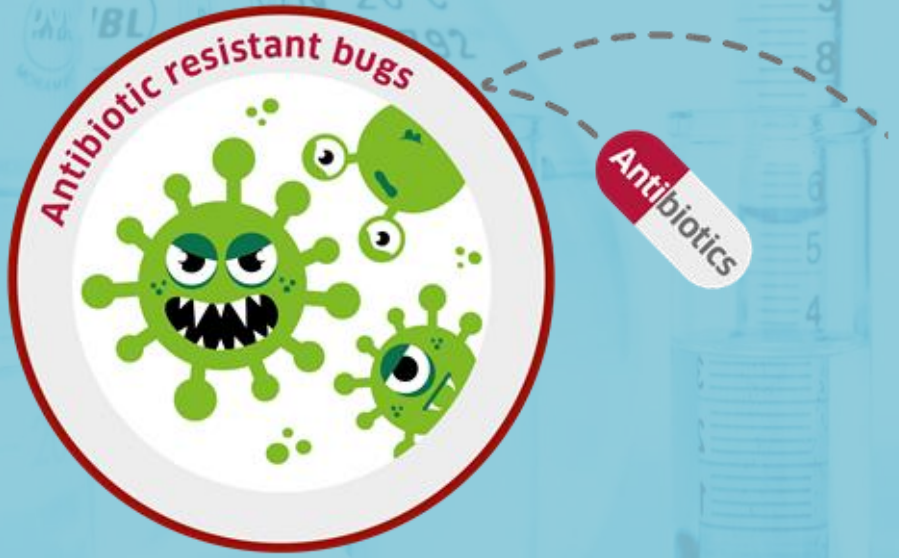
Interactions with Antibiotics

- Antibiotics can interact with other medicines, herbs or supplements.
- Ask your pharmacist whether your medicines, herbs or supplements can be taken with your antibiotics.
- Some antibiotics, such as rifampicin, can reduce the effectiveness of the contraceptive pill.
- If you are prescribed with rifampicin, you may need to use additional contraception, such as condoms, while taking antibiotics. Consult your pharmacist for advice.

Antibiotic Resistance

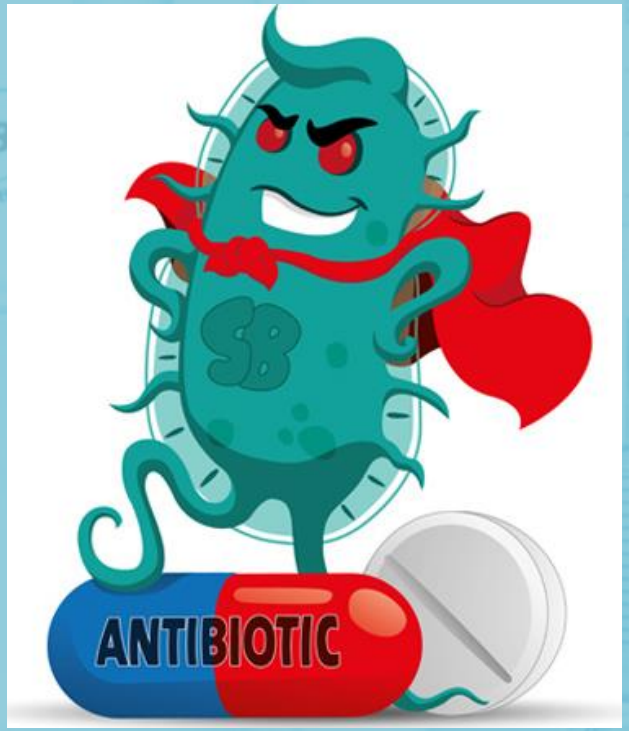
- Antibiotic resistance is a condition where antibiotics lose their ability to kill bacteria or prevent their growth.

- The resistant bacteria will survive and continue to grow.



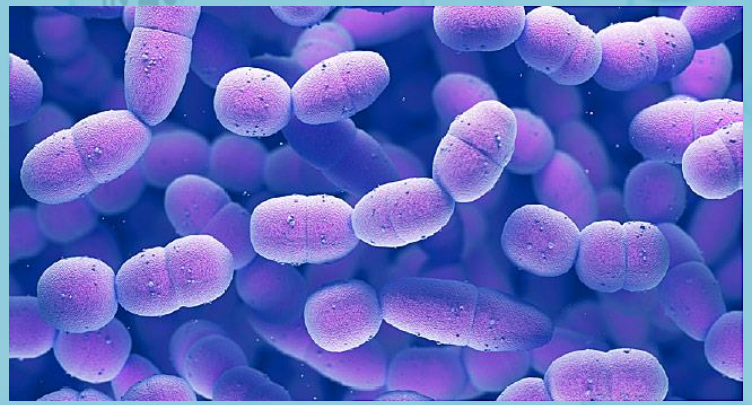
Causes of Antibiotic Resistance

- Overuse of antibiotics
- Not taking antibiotics according to the instructions on the label
- Not finishing a course of antibiotics
- Unnecessary use of antibiotics such as taking them for colds



Consequences of Antibiotic Resistance

- Infections are more difficult to treat.
- The length of stay in hospitals is longer.
- The cost of treatment is higher.
- The risk of death is greater.



How can I prevent antibiotic resistance?

- Take antibiotics according to the instructions on the label and finish the prescribed course, even if you feel better.
- Never skip doses of antibiotics.
- Never share antibiotics with anyone else.
- Never save antibiotics for future use.
- Never take leftover antibiotics from previous treatments, even if similar symptoms arise.
- Never ask for antibiotics from your doctor

How can I prevent antibiotic resistance?

- Avoid infections and prevent their spread by:
- Washing your hands frequently with soap and water.
- Using a tissue to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.
- Avoiding close contact with those who are feeling unwell.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth, because germs can transfer from your hands into your body.

Pharmacist’s Role in Antibiotic Resistance

- ✓ **Pharmacists will only dispense antibiotics with a valid prescription from the doctor.**
- ✓ **Consult your neighborhood community pharmacist for more information and any consultations regarding usage of antibiotics.**
- ✓ **Pharmacists are medication experts and community pharmacists are front liners in assisting patient care.**

Summary

- Antibiotics are medicines used to **treat bacterial infections**.
- Antibiotics are **NOT effective** for the treatment of **viral infections** such as colds.
- If your doctor prescribes antibiotics, **take them according to the instructions** on the label and finish the prescribed course to prevent antibiotic resistance.

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